CROYDON PHILATELIC SOCIETY:
NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28TH FEBRUARY 2017

President Richard West opened the meeting at 19.45 hours and introduced **Barbara Priddy** and invited her to present her display on **West African Airmails.**

Barbara explained that the earliest mail to West Africa, carried by air for part of the way, was a Ballon Monté from Paris addressed to San Luis in Senegal in 1870. A 1911 postcard was shown of an aircraft in West Africa but the airmail did not really get under way until the 1920s.

Much of the early flying concentrated on flying the 1600 miles down the West African coast to Dakar with a view to eventually flying across the South Atlantic to Brazil. In the early days there were many aborted flights and Barbara displayed an impressive selection of covers saved from these crashes and bearing the appropriate cachets.

Lemaître and Arrachart carried mail to Dakar in 1925 and Latécoère followed shortly after. The Latécoère 28-3, was the first to make a postal delivery crossing of the South Atlantic when Jean Mermoz flew from Dakar to Natal in 21 hours and a half on 12 May 1930. Barbara gave a spirited commentary on her many fine pre-1939 flown covers which were beautifully written up by hand.

Members enjoyed the displays, President Richard gave a vote of thanks and the meeting closed at 21.10 hours.

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Graham Harker, Honorary Assistant Secretary